

## Keily | Lucas's Arm

### Lucas's Arm

I blinked twice.

He wanted me.

His eyes traced my face and paused on my lips. I was studying his face too. The air around us became heavy, and my skin buzzed with awareness. I was becoming familiar with this connection between us.

*He wants me.*

*He. Wants. Me.*

"A-are you making fun of me?" I asked, trying to keep my composure.

His lips pulled down in a frown. Unlike other times, it looked kind of cute. *No, don't think he's cute. He's evil.*

"You were going to step up your game. Is this it?" I said, feeling vulnerable and insecure. I didn't trust James. For all I knew, this could turn out to be another tasteless joke to have a good laugh.

He groaned. "Don't tell me I fucked up that much?"

I created space between us and moved my eyes away from him. I spotted some students looking at us and blushed again, feeling uncomfortable. I didn't want to repeat what had happened at his party.

"I have to go." I still didn't meet his gaze. Ultimately, I always lost against him despite all the teachings from Addison.

"Okay," James said, probably sensing my discomfort. But before I could leave, he held my wrist, stopping me from running away. His hand was warm.

"Just remember I mean it. I want you." He moved closer, and his lips brushed my ear. "And this time, I'll do it fucking right to get you."

I couldn't make out if he sounded scary or sexy...

He freed me to storm out of the hallway, flushed and scared for my dear life. *Why does this devil have to keep playing with me?*

\*\*\*

*James. James. James.*

He was all that swarmed inside my mind, bordering on obsession. Was it healthy to think about one person every five minutes? Probably not. But I couldn't help myself.

The bomb he'd dropped on me this morning had made me restless and excited.

"I want you."

*He wants me.*

Every time I replayed his confession in my mind, butterflies erupted from my chest to my belly. I felt like I was on cloud nine...

But then his insults and cruel words barged in, crashing me back to reality, and I was reminded of how messed up our situation was. I couldn't just forget about his horrible behavior.

He had degraded me, hurt me. And a part of me—a not so small part—was skeptical about him and *this thing between us*.

"Coach is eating our brains about the season," Lucas grumbled. "I know the guy breathes football, but damn, he needs to chill."

Lucas ran into me on our way to Calculus while I was daydreaming about his friend. Now we were walking together to the classroom. I was anticipating as well as dreading seeing James there.

I nodded at Lucas's words. "There's already so much pressure on you guys about winning."

The first game of the season was next week, and given how the game was a religion here, I could imagine the burden of everybody's expectations on the team—especially Lucas, since he was the captain.

I wondered how James felt about it. After Lucas, it was him that everyone looked up to.

“And this time it’s even shittier, because the scouts will be coming to see us. My college scholarship depends on this season.” Lucas exhaled heavily. “Coach Martin shoves that in my face every session, like I’m already not losing sleep over it.”

“It’s okay to be nervous, but try not to stress yourself out,” I say, trying to pacify our quarterback. “Coach is most likely losing his sleep over you too. You’re his favorite.”

Lucas smiled before fiddling with his fingers; a habit I’d learned meant he was agitated. “I’m just scared. My future is on the line here.”

I didn’t know how to respond. It was already unnerving to play with so many eyes on you, and to have your future decided by how you performed under all that pressure could definitely be excruciating.

Even I, a person who couldn’t care less about the rambunctious game, had put expectations on our team at Friday’s game.

“I don’t want to mess it up. A football scholarship is my only ticket to higher education.” Lucas looked at me, anxiety and uncertainty brimming in his eyes. “It’s the only thing I’m good at. I can’t imagine myself doing anything else. If I don’t succeed in it, I have no other plans.”

It was the first time I was seeing Lucas this vulnerable. I hadn’t realized we’d gotten this close for him to share his insecurities. He’d always acted so suave and amicable.

This scout thing was really putting him on edge.

Colleges were big deals for me too, so I could at least empathize with him on that.

“You can’t control the outcome, but you can control your actions,” I said. “Focus only on your practices and games. I know it’s easier said than done, but don’t lose yourself to worrying. It’s going to eat away your energy.”

I felt so hypocritical saying that when I myself was a big oozing ball of anxiety and overthinking. Someone rightly said, *It’s easier to preach than to follow.*

“I’m telling you this from experience. The more you make a big deal of something, the more overwhelming it becomes,” I added, hinting I was no saint.

“You’re right, but…”

“But it’s not easy to follow through,” I finished with a snort. His chuckle followed. “I’m sorry, I’m not being very helpful. But if my unprofessional opinion matters, I think you’re very good at football. You’ll be fine.”

“Thanks. Your unprofessional opinion matters very much to me.” He beamed proudly, and I felt good for making him feel a teeny bit better. “And you’re being helpful by letting me vent. When I’m stressed, that’s what I need.”

I nodded. He didn’t need advice, just an ear to listen to him.

He continued, “Guys are too much of dipshits to take my problems seriously. James is kind of all right in that regard.

“Usually it’s him who I pester, but right now you play a pretty good make-believe therapist too.” He bumped my shoulder playfully as we neared our classroom.

My stomach swirled at the mention of James.

“Thank you for the honor of calling me a therapist that I can’t live up to.” I gave Lucas a mocking glare. “But what I’m hearing is that I’m a replacement for James. When will you guys end this fight?”

I’d noted the tension between them both since Monday.

He huffed. “We’re not fighting per se; we’re just not on talking terms.”

I sighed. “I don’t want any trouble between you guys because of me.” I felt awful being the reason for Lucas holding a grudge against his friend—especially now that I was discovering how close they were.

“Don’t be such a goody two-shoes, Keily. Let him suffer a little.”

“What about you?” We stepped inside the class, and my heart sped up when I saw James at his seat. His fiery gaze locked with mine, stealing my breath and heating me up.

“No worries for me; I already have you.” Lucas threw his arm around my shoulders, pulling me into a side hug, and I saw James’s eyes darken.

The way those narrowed slits focused on us, I finally discovered the meaning behind them.

Jealousy.

My insecurities and his taunts and jeers had previously stopped me from reaching the conclusion that he could be jealous of someone else touching me. But now I had more context.

*I want you.*

If I went by his words, of course.

I felt gleeful, scared, thrilled, bitter, wanting him, hating him all at the same time, not knowing which one to settle on.

*He’s jealous of Lucas. Just kill me right now.*

Lucas’s arm on me didn’t last for even a minute before he let go, and we walked to our desks. I noticed a triumphant smirk on his lips when I managed to tear my eyes away from James.

I realized Lucas had deliberately gotten touchy-feely with me in front of James to incite him. I didn’t know whether to smack the idiot or thank him for exacting my revenge.

“Thank God today’s no practice,” Lucas said after we settled into our seats. “Tomorrow, Martin is going to kill us with training, but for now, I can’t wait to get home.”

He yawned and stretched his limbs before peering at me with a mischievous smile. “You should come to my place with me sometime, Keily. I’d love to introduce you to my mom.

“Although she’s usually at work at this time, but we can have our fun until she returns.” His suggestive statement was loud enough for a certain someone to hear.

Without blinking, my eyes moved to James, who was glaring at his table. His jaw was clenched, and his fingers were digging into the wood painfully.

Whatever Lucas had intended, he had achieved. And I, shamefully, enjoyed it.

\*\*\*

“Your website looks good,” Mrs. Green said as she went through the website on the computer that James and I were working on.

Our thumb drive was attached to James’s system, and he’d stood up to let her have the seat.

“Well, I’m impressed,” she commented, bringing a smile to my face. She stood up and, before leaving, remarked offhandedly, “You two make a good team.”

“Yeah, we do.” James dropped back onto his chair. I noticed his lips pulled up a little before going back down.

Throughout the class, he had sported a scowl, which I suspected had to do with Lucas teasing him in Calculus. I was no innocent either, because I hadn’t stopped him.

When the bell rang, I jumped from my seat and stormed out of the lab. Spending time in that devil’s proximity was turning my half-functioning brain mushy.

“Keily.” My feet stopped as I heard *him* call my name. We were in the hallway.

Next Chapter

[Continue to the next chapter of Keily](#)